United Nations

Centre against Apartheid

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Following is the text of a statement issued on 13 October 1991 by the Minister of External Relations and Trade, the Honourable Don McKinnon of New Zealand on New Zealand's recent assistance to South African exiles:

"New Zealand will provide $50,000 to assist in the repatriation to South Africa of thousands of exiles who fled the apartheid system over the past thirty years.

For decades New Zealand has actively supported the international campaign to pressure the South African Government to dismantle the apartheid system and to encourage a process of democratisation. That process is now under way and it is appropriate that New Zealand now helps those victims of apartheid return to their country.

With some 35,000 exiles to be repatriated, it is clear that international assistance is required. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees asked us to help, and we are pleased to respond.

New Zealand's contribution will be channelled through the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees' Contingency Plan for Repatriation to South Africa. The plan will focus on transporting refugees, providing life-sustaining assistance, and assisting with reintegration by providing inputs in education and employment. The UNHCR has signed a memorandum of understanding with the South African Government to assist in repatriating refugees.

It helps clear one of the obstacles to negotiations on a non-racial democratic constitution, and is in accordance with one of the Commonwealth's criteria for the resumption of people-to-people contacts."